



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

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**GOVERNOR WARNER LAUNCHES PARTNERSHIP TO RAISE
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AT LOWEST PERFORMING
SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA**

~PASS initiative will target individual school needs, community and business mentoring~

RICHMOND—Governor Mark R. Warner today launched a statewide partnership with business and community leaders, state educators, and local school and government officials to boost student achievement in Virginia's lowest academically performing schools.

The **Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools**, or **PASS**, will assist more than 100 academically warned schools with a comprehensive plan to marshal community and business support. Approximately 117 schools statewide which have been "accredited with warning" due to student performance on Standards of Learning exams will receive enhanced services from visiting academic review teams comprised of principals, teachers and retired educators.

In addition, the Governor has designated 34 of these schools as PASS Priority Schools. These schools will receive up to 12 days of intervention by academic review teams, with additional follow-up to track progress made by students, teachers and administrators.

These schools already are subject to school improvement sanctions under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Governor will visit all 34 PASS Priority Schools and pledged to help recruit business partners and mentors to assist them.

For the remaining 83 schools, academic review teams will spend up to four days reviewing curricula and advising administrators and faculty on effective strategies for boosting student performance on the SOLs.

"Children at these schools need help now—help that goes beyond simply dollars, beyond school division lines and beyond geographical and political boundaries," Governor Warner said. He announced the initiative during a news conference at Woodville Elementary School in Richmond, one of 17 PASS priority schools in the city.

Governor Warner appointed former Richmond Delegate Jean Cunningham and Universal Corporation Chairman and CEO Henry Harrell to lead an effort to organize business and community support for the 34 PASS Priority Schools. Each school will be paired with a partner from the business community, who in turn will recruit additional businesses and community organizations. These “PASS Partners” will provide a variety of services to students, including the sponsorship of research-based tutoring in reading and mathematics. Participating businesses and community organizations, including faith-based groups, will be provided PASS Initiative logos to display in windows and advertisements to publicize their support for the initiative.

“We know that partnerships build successful schools, so we are asking students, parents, teachers, principals, communities and business leaders across Virginia to join this partnership,” Governor Warner said. “We all have a duty to these children to give these schools the help they need to help themselves.”

“The PASS Initiative will emphasize collaboration,” said Secretary of Education Belle Wheelan. “Principals and teachers who have made great strides in raising the achievement of disadvantaged children will share their knowledge and experience and then roll up their sleeves and help their counterparts get the job done.”

Goals of the PASS initiative include:

- Increasing reading and math achievement in schools that are accredited with warning;
- Building the capacity of those schools to achieve and maintain high student achievement;
- Engaging business and community groups as partners; and
- Expanding parental involvement in their children’s education.

According to the current SOL results, there are 117 schools in Virginia accredited with warning. The initiative will employ four intervention models designed to assist low-performing schools:

- **Model I: All schools currently accredited with warning will receive enhanced academic reviews.** In addition to observing instruction, examining curricula and scheduling, and making recommendations on strengthening instruction, academic review teams will provide staff development in the use of assessment data and assist in the design and implementation of school improvement plans.
- **Model II: Instructional Assistance Teams will assist 26 of the 34 PASS Priority schools in achieving immediate increases in student performance in reading and mathematics.** Teams will be led by principals with track records of raising achievement of at-risk students and will include teachers with expertise in mathematics and reading. The Instructional Assistance Teams will work collaboratively with principals and faculty to ensure that curriculum is aligned with the commonwealth’s academic standards and that assessment data are analyzed to improve instruction.

- **Model III: Residential Support Teams will be assigned to Richmond and Portsmouth to provide full-time assistance to two PASS Priority Schools in each city.** Teachers at each school will receive professional development services tailored to the school's instructional needs. Students will receive research-based tutoring in reading and mathematics, and will be paired with mentors for support and encouragement. Adult literacy services will be offered as needed to families in the communities served by these four schools.
- **Model IV: Petersburg will receive division-wide support and assistance from the Appalachian Educational Laboratory and the Virginia Department of Education.** A division-level coordinator will help with the design and implementation of a division-wide plan to raise student achievement. Each of the division's 10 schools will be assigned a school-level coordinator to assist in the implementation of the plan.

"Petersburg provides an ideal setting for this approach because of its size and that fact that all of the schools in the division are on academic warning," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Jo Lynne DeMary. Four of Petersburg's schools are PASS Priority Schools.

Based on the results of tests administered during the 2000-01 school year, 7 percent of Virginia's 1,800 public schools currently are accredited with warning in one or more subjects. The majority of the Commonwealth's schools have either met the student achievement goals for full accreditation (40 percent) or have met or exceeded the state's benchmarks for progress toward full accreditation (30 percent). The remaining schools (23 percent) are making progress toward full accreditation but have failed to raise student achievement to benchmark levels in one or more of the four core subject areas.

Accreditation ratings for the 2002-03 school year (based on the results of tests administered during 2001-02) will be released this fall.

Businesses or others seeking information about how to get involved in PASS can call 1-800-292-3820 or go to the Governor's Web site at www.governor.state.va.us/Initiatives/PASS/ for more details.

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